

Conservation Administrator's Report

Jo-Anne Crystoff, Conservation Administrator and Agent

July 2021

The pond treatments for invasive and nuisance aquatic vegetation are underway in Sandy Pond, Flannagan Pond and Pine Meadow Pond. The final treatment will be conducted in late summer or early fall. Water and Wetland LLC will be working on Ayer's ponds as our contractor this year. Notification of the date of pond treatments will be posted by the contractor ahead of each treatment.

Waterways signs are being designed by a graphic artist and locations for the signs have been chosen by the Conservation Administrator and the Town Engineer. We hope to have the 10 signs installed by mid October.

A beaver deceiver installation estimate has been received by the Commission for Bennett's Brook/Shaker Mill Pond. The Commission is working with the Town Engineer on a comprehensive, Town-wide beaver interaction plan for an increasing number of interaction sites in town.

Senior Work-off help has arrived in the Conservation office to assist with the backlog of office tasks caused by the increase in applications and activities. We are very grateful for the help!

Catania Oils' expansion project on Nemco Way has begun construction. The heavy rains caused some issues with water management early in the project. The site is stable now and work is proceeding.

Ayer Solar II B, a large-scale, ground mounted solar installation off Washington Street, is starting construction activities. The pre-construction meeting took place this month with Conservation, Planning, Engineering, DPW, and Fire in attendance along with the site work contractor and the project owners. This project is being constructed in an environmentally sensitive site and will be closely monitored by Conservation.

A draft Fertilizer Use Bylaw is being reviewed by the Commission for inclusion on the warrant for fall town meeting.

Applications for projects continue to flood into the Commission office. A large Open Space Residential Development subdivision off Washington Street has submitted applications for 16 single family houses to Conservation. Multiple homeowner projects are seeking approval for work adjacent to wetland resource areas. A time control plan for packed agendas helps keep the Commission on track. The Commission continues to assess how best to accommodate demand with limited staff resources. The amount of new development coming to Ayer that requires Conservation Commission permits is straining our capacity to manage a large number of permit applications and ongoing oversight.

Please contact the Conservation office with any questions at concom@ayer.ma.us or 978-772-8220 x143